

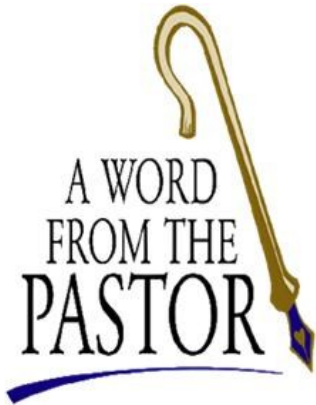


# The Informer

August 2025

St. John's Lutheran Church

Volume 68 Issue 9



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See The Informer  
IN COLOR  
On Our Website

*"I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ." (Philippians 1:3-6)*

My dear family in Christ,

As I prepare to retire my heart is heavy in the knowledge that I must leave the congregational family I have loved and served for nearly half of my life. Despite the disappointments that have led me to believe the time is right for my retirement, the words of the apostle Paul reflect my own feelings. I joyfully thank God in all my remembrance of you because of the partnership we have shared in the gospel. I also trust that you will continue this partnership with your next pastor and give him the same love, encouragement and support that you have given to me from the first day until now.

I am not worried about those who may be glad to see me go. Perhaps my departure will give them reason to return. I am, however, concerned about those of you who feel that life at St. John's will not be the same without old Pastor Umbarger around. I wish to use this opportunity to remind you that I am only an easily replaceable under shepherd. Your true Shepherd always has been and always will be Jesus Christ. It will always be He who baptizes you, absolves you, feeds you with His body and blood and speaks His Word into your heart.

The Apostle Paul offers some great insight for you as you go through this time of transition. He writes:

*...one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos,"... What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task...For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building. (1 Cor. 3:4-5, 9)* If you are only at St. John's because you are following a man or would consider leaving because of the loss of that man, then I have failed in my ministry. I had always intended to proclaim only Christ and Him crucified. For a while I planted. Your next pastor, my co-worker in God's service, will water but it will always be Christ who grants growth and prepares for the harvest. As Paul, again, writes, *"[Christ] is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. (Colossians 1:18)* I urge you to keep the St. John's family together. Love and serve one another. And let your faithfulness and dedication to Christ and His Church remain steadfast.

I will miss all of you so much, and though no longer able to serve as your pastor, I pray that our friendship in Christ will continue. Finally, farewell. Do not be anxious about your future because the Lord will certainly provide. As was Paul with the saints at Philippi, I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

In Christ's love,

Pastor Umbarger

## Meet Our Vacancy Pastor

Friends in Christ,

Some of you already know me. Others of you don't. A few of you have known me for a long time. I'm from Milan, baptized at Zion, Taylor Ridge, and nurtured in the Faith at St. Matthew. I attended public schools, graduating from Rock Island High School in 1974. But we can still be friends. Before I went off to school, I met my wife, Sara, who is a 1976 graduate of Orion High School.

We were married in 1978, and she worked while I went to school. I graduated from Concordia Teachers College (now Concordia University Chicago) with a B.A. in Education in 1981. From there, we moved to Ft. Wayne, and I graduated from Concordia Theological Seminary in 1985. My vicarage was at Trinity, Kalispell, MT, and my first Call was assigned to Zion, Burnett, WI.

Then I served as the Sole Pastor at churches in Missouri and Kansas, and in 2001 moved to Colorado Springs to work at Shepherd of the Springs Lutheran Church and School, where I served as Associate Pastor and wore several hats at their high school. In 2004 I put on several hats at our own Christ Lutheran High School in Davenport and Rock Island. The school closed in 2010.

I wrote a book, and for the next three years did pulpit supply, filled vacancies, and did a *Let's Talk About Preaching* workshop for pastors. In the spring of 2013, I was installed at Immanuel in Grand Mound (5 miles west of DeWitt on the Lincoln Highway). At the end of June last year I went to Emeritus status, took my pension, and didn't do anything for a year. Now I'm doing things.

One of the things I'm doing is being your Vacancy Pastor, starting in August. I will be leading Adult Bible Class and Divine Service on Sunday morning. It looks like you will be served on Saturday by other Circuit Pastors on a rotating basis. I'm also planning on beginning work on an advanced degree in September, and several other projects that I want to or think should happen.

Along the way we had three children; Kate is married to Dave, and they live mostly in Austin, TX, Justin lives in Davenport, and Laura and husband Ben live in Farmington, MI (Detroit) with Harper, our almost four-year old granddaughter. Ava is our other granddaughter. We also have many other relatives in the area, including my brother David, who is Pastor at Trinity, Coal Valley.

Pastor Hagen is also Emeritus, and he has agreed to take care of shut-in and hospital visits during this vacancy. Between the two of us, we will do our best to fill in the blanks. It's been a while since this congregation has been vacant, and you should be aware that we do our best to prioritize those blanks, but there are things a full-time pastor does that are put on hold during a vacancy.

I have known Pastor Umbarger for many years. He has served you well for these many years. I always told my people at Grand Mound that I'm a placeholder who will one day be replaced by another Shepherd. When that happens, God sends that next Shepherd in His time, and He already knows who that man will be. We pray that He would let us know who that is and do so quickly!

In Christian Service,  
Pastor Anderson

### CAKE RECEPTION

The fellowship committee invites the congregation to welcome our vacancy pastor, Rev. Steven Anderson, with a cake reception following worship on **Sunday, August 10th.**



## Serving the Lord

### Ushers

**Sat, Aug 2:** Greg Burke, Todd Miller,  
Rick Newlon, & Larry Ripka

**Sun, Aug 3:** Glen McMillin

**Sat, Aug 9:** Greg Burke, Todd Miller,  
Rick Newlon, & Larry Ripka

**Sun, Aug 10:**

**Sat, Aug 16:** Greg Burke, Todd Miller,  
Rick Newlon, & Larry Ripka

**Sun, Aug 17:** Glen McMillin

**Sat, Aug 23:** Greg Burke, Todd Miller,  
Rick Newlon, & Larry Ripka

**Sun, Aug 24:**

**Sat, Aug 30:** Greg Burke, Todd Miller,  
Rick Newlon, & Larry Ripka

**Sun, Aug 31:** Glen McMillin

### Greeters

**Sat, Aug 2:** Chuck Brokaw

**Sun, Aug 3:**

**Sat, Aug 9:** Chuck Brokaw

**Sun, Aug 10:**

**Sat, Aug 16:** Chuck Brokaw

**Sun, Aug 17:**

**Sat, Aug 23:** Chuck Brokaw

**Sun, Aug 24:**

**Sat, Aug 30:** Chuck Brokaw

**Sun, Aug 31:**

### Communion Assistants

**Aug 3:** Ralph Grotelueschen &  
Jonathan Schmidt

**Aug 17:** Dennis Boarts & Kevin  
McAnally

**Aug 31:** Jim Homann & Brian Kern

### Acolytes

**Sun, Aug 3:** Nathan Duffy

**Sun, Aug 10:** Sloane Churchill

**Sun, Aug 17:** John Kjera

**Sun, Aug 24:** Joel Duffy

**Sun, Aug 31:** Briella Churchill



### Altar Guild

Marsha Boarts & Diana Lackey

# THANK YOU!

### Flowers

**Aug 3:** Lucille Perley

**Aug 10:** In honor of Judy Jennings birthday,  
from Rhea and Ray

Additional bouquet: Karen  
Schmidt

**Aug 17:** Rod and Noreen  
Hopkins, in honor of their 38th  
anniversary

**Aug 24:** Larry and Sharon  
Ripka

**Aug 31:** OPEN



### Eternal Candle

**Aug 3:** Evan and Dawn Antolik, in honor of Allison's  
birthday

**Aug 10:** Karen Schmidt

**Aug 17:** OPEN

**Aug 24:** Larry and Sharon Ripka

**Aug 31:** OPEN



## Church News

### Birthdays

**August 1** - Susan Parvin

**August 2** - Rebekah Weber

**August 4** - Sandy Dosch & Ron Heitzman

**August 5** - Allison Antolik & Linda Sharp

**August 6** - Betty Bell, Marlene Fellows, Debbie Girard, & Paul Sellers

**August 7** - Debbie VanRycke

**August 9** - Lori McMillin

**August 10** - Mary McGee, Jill Schofield & Jonathan Weakley

**August 11** - Duane Gosa & Jennifer Schmidt

**August 12** - Grant Engelkes, Judy Jennings & Terry Tipsword

**August 13** - Todd Miller

**August 14** - Scott Kelly

**August 15** - Sarah Schofield

**August 16** - Kathy Verstraete

**August 17** - Lydia Merritt

**August 18** - Karen Hatfield & Mildred VanRycke

**August 19** - Gavin Johnson

**August 21** - Kinzlee Antolik & Jordan Johanson

**August 22** - David Rogers

**August 23** - Ken Cobb, Brian Engebrecht, Laura Frankowski, Carrie Johnson & Jacob Rossmiller

**August 27** - Joyce Hoffman, Easton Nitz & Theresa Roberson

**August 28** - Bill Girard, Robert Lilly, Paula Pratt & Margie Schaefer

**August 29** - Don Hakeman, Gail Massey & Michele Rogers

**August 30** - Norma Johnson & Anne Williams



### Weekly Attendance

<u>DATE</u>	<u>THIS YEAR</u>	<u>LAST YEAR</u>
6/29	127	134
7/6	139	150
7/13	151	120
7/20	154	123

Average monthly attendance of St. John's membership: 29 %

### Membership Report

Baptism:

Madison Sihrer (07/13/2025)

### REMINDER!

There are Board Meetings on Thursday, August 7th at 6:30pm!

## Notes from the Balcony

August

As we enter this post-retirement month, I took a peek at the two hymns from the Ordination/Installation section of The Lutheran Service Book. Perhaps one or both of these were sung at Pastor Umbarger's ordination. It seems fitting to look at the text of one of these hymns and use it as the basis to fashion a prayer of thanksgiving for the many years God has given to us under the care of His faithful shepherd. If you are unsure what I mean, pray the words, "Lord, thank you for..." before the start of each new idea in the hymn, and change the words of the hymn to the past tense.

### LSB 681 Send, O Lord, Your Holy Spirit

1. Send, O Lord, Your Holy Spirit

On Your servant now, we pray;  
Let him prove a faithful shepherd,  
That no lamb be led astray.  
Your pure teaching to proclaim,  
To extol Your holy name,  
And to feed Your lambs, dear Savior,  
Make his aim and sole endeavor.

2. You, O Lord, Yourself have called him

For Your precious lambs to care;  
But to prosper in his calling,  
He the Spirit's gifts must share.  
Give him wisdom from above,  
Fill his heart with holy love;  
In his weakness, Lord, be near him,  
In his prayers, Good Shepherd, hear him.

3. Help, Lord Jesus, help him nourish

All our children with Your Word  
That in fervent love they serve You  
Till in heaven their song is heard.  
Boundless blessings, Lord, bestow  
On his faithful toil below  
Till by grace to him be given  
His reward, the crown of heaven.

May God's peace be with you,  
Christine Engebrecht



## LWML

**LWML - Lutheran Women's Missionary League** is an auxiliary of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. All ladies are welcome!

**LWML meeting will be Thursday, August 15th at 1:00 pm in the Janssen rooms. Come and join us for some summer treats and games.**



### *A Word about Mites and Missions*

All mite donations are sent into Central Illinois District (CID) LWML.

- ✓ 75% of your donation goes to LWML CID Mission Grants
- ✓ 25% of your donation goes to National LWML Mission Grants

LWML held their National Convention in Omaha Nebraska on June 26-29, 2025. The mission grant goal is \$2,622,270 and that will fully fund the 33 projects. The following is a list of those National Mission Grants. For more information see [www.LWML.org](http://www.LWML.org)

### **National LWML 2025–2027 Mission Grants**

1. **Regional Disaster Response LERT Shower Trailers** — LCMS Office of National Mission, Disaster Response Ministry, U.S. — \$81,500
2. **Help for Ukraine's Orphans and Displaced Persons** — Orphan Grain Train, Europe — \$100,000
3. **Portable Laundry Trailer** — Forged by Fire Services, U.S. — \$100,700
4. **The Perpetual Call for Pastors and Teachers** — LCMS Office of Pastoral Education, U.S. — \$100,000
5. **Growing Together to Share Braille and Large Print** — Lutheran Braille Workers, U.S. — \$100,000
6. **Christ-Centered Hope for Cancer Patients** — Phil's Friends, U.S. — \$100,000
7. **Light of Jesus Christ to Unwed Homeless Mothers** — A Place of Refuge Ministries of South WI, Inc., Wisconsin — \$75,000
8. **Building a Place of Care** — Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch, North Dakota — \$60,000
9. **Introducing Muslims to the Savior** — Lutheran Heritage Foundation, Global — \$100,000
10. **Healing Your Heart — Faith-based Child Counseling** — Lutheran Counseling and Family Services of Wisconsin, U.S. — \$100,000
11. **NOT ALONE: Gospel Help for Families in Crisis** — Lutheran Family Service, Iowa — \$92,500
12. **Gospel Outreach through the Digital Mission Field** — Lutheran Hour Ministries, U.S. — \$100,000
13. **Reaching God's Children in Haiti** — Trinity HOPE, Haiti — \$61,782
14. **Reaching Jewish People with the Gospel in Israel** — The Apple of His Eye Mission Society, Asia — \$100,000
15. **Arch Books for Immigrant Children in the USA** — Concordia Publishing House — Concordia Gospel Outreach, U.S. — \$125,000
16. **The Teaching of Lutheran Pastors in West Africa** — Sierra Leone and Liberia — Project: Pastoral Education West Africa — \$86,000

## LWML

17. **Mobilizing After School Care for Teens** — Our Place After School Care Inc., Hastings, Nebraska — \$69,500
18. **Scholarships to Support International Deaconesses** — Tanzania — Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Africa — \$100,000
19. **Support Rev. Roberto and Katie Weber** — LCMS Missionaries to the Dominican Republic, North America — \$10,000
20. **Mercy Triumphs: LCMS Prison Ministry** — LCMS Office of National Mission, U.S. — \$84,500
21. **Shining a Bright Gospel Light** — Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church and School, Mobile, Alabama — \$78,675
22. **Redeeming Life New Moms and Babies Transition Home** — Redeeming Life Outreach Ministries, Illinois — \$100,000
23. **Sharing Faith and Food with Single Mothers** — Risen Savior Lutheran Church, Wichita, Kansas — \$38,800
24. **Ministry Scholarships for Shepherd's Canyon Retreat** — Arizona, U.S. — \$100,000
25. **Pastoral Wellness: Pastor Family Week** — Camp Linn Haven, North Carolina — \$15,000
26. **Developing Capable Christian High School Leaders** — Sioux Falls Lutheran School, South Dakota — \$100,000
27. **Teaching Christ to the Physically Handicapped** — Lutheran High School of Greater New Orleans, Louisiana — \$12,000
28. **Mission Opportunities for a New Generation** — MOST Ministries, Global — \$50,000
29. **Sharing God's Love and Changing Lives of Families** — Camp Restore Detroit, Michigan — \$81,313
30. **Increasing Access to Lutheran Counseling Services** — Concordia Counseling: A Lutheran Outreach Ministry, Inc., Indiana — \$100,000
31. **Speaking Truth Around the Table** — Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty, U.S. — \$75,000
32. **Proclaiming Christ in Honduras** — Mision Evangelica Luterana Confesional en Honduras, Central America — \$25,000
33. **Reaching Out with God's Love in a Safe Place** — Forward, a Ministry of Trinity Lutheran Church, Lincoln, Nebraska — \$100,000

### CID LWML 2025-2026 Mission Grants

The CID LWML held their convention April 26, 2025 in Lincoln Illinois and set the mission goal for 2025-2026 as \$110,000 with \$82,500 for district grants and the remaining funds to national mission grants. Updates will be available at [www.lwmlcid.org](http://www.lwmlcid.org).

1. Student Aid for Church Workers - \$30,000
2. LCMS Disaster Relief - \$10,000
3. CID Dollars for Mission- \$25,000
4. Healing Spaces for At-Risk Children - \$10,000
5. Just for Moms - \$3,544
6. Our Savior Lutheran School in Uganda - \$3,956

*Prayers:* Please keep the LWML mites and missions in your prayers.  
Praise the Lord for His blessings!

## Jesus' transforming presence

*"But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, 'Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.' Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost'" (Luke 19:8-10 NIV).*

Who knew, all those kids sitting in Sunday school were getting a lesson in stewardship! Generations of children have very often heard lessons based on the familiar account of Zacchaeus. The diminutive tax collector's curiosity surrounding the person and ministry of Jesus is what the Holy Spirit used to set him on a collision course for a total stewardship transformation. This transformation, according to the text of Luke 19, is not just about this life. This stewardship transformation is about eternity as well!

Remember the story: Zacchaeus was a tax collector. Do not think of friendly neighborhood IRS agents. This was more like a toll booth operator, but the governing authorities did not set the toll. They would contract men to staff roadside booths and tax the commerce that was passing along the road. This was an enterprise full of greed and graft. The tax collectors would take as much as they could and only pass on a portion to the government. The rest did not go into the community chest either! It went into the pocket of the tax collector. This is why the people had such disdain for *Jewish* tax collectors. They were seen as both crooks and traitors. They were crooks in that they extorted their compatriots and others in the toll process. But worse, they were seen as traitors because their efforts supported the occupying Roman authorities. That is the real reason that the people would not make way so that short Zacchaeus could see Jesus.

For this reason, he runs ahead and climbs a tree. He had heard all the stories. He wanted to see this Jesus with his own eyes. Mercy is on display. This hated crook and traitor gets a direct audience with Jesus — at Jesus' own request! Jesus invites Himself to Zacchaeus' house. This is where the transformation is about to take place!

Notice how Jesus does it. He does not preach a three-week sermon series, nor does He ask Zacchaeus to make a pledge. There is nothing programmatic about Jesus' approach. But Zacchaeus is completely transformed! The transforming force is the very presence of Jesus! Direct time with Jesus takes a crooked, selfish, criminal and makes him the most faithful steward.

This new life of stewardship is marked by the promises made. First, he gives half of his ill-gotten gains to the poor. These are people whom he would not have defrauded at all! Yet, after spending time with Jesus, they are His first concern. Only after this does he double the requirement of the Levitical law on fraud. And what does Jesus say is the result? Salvation!

Doing the acts of stewardship does not save. Rather, the faith in Jesus that is created by the Holy Spirit is what saves! This is critical for us to confess. Failed stewardship can and will cut you off from God. The only antidote for failed stewardship is the presence of Jesus.

We do not need to run ahead and climb a tree for this presence of Jesus. He makes Himself available to us every week in the Divine Service. He speaks His Word of invitation to us in the pages of Holy Scripture. This, and this alone, transforms us from sinner to saint, from owner to steward of all that belongs to the Lord. Do you want to become a more faithful steward? Spend more time with Jesus. Make the Divine Service a weekly priority. Feast on Christ's body and blood weekly! This is the great gift that brings salvation from God's House to yours!

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
9am - Worship w/ 10:15am - Bible Study /	1pm - Staff Meeting 6:30pm - Courtyard Meeting	10am - Food Pantry 6:30pm - Guitar Jam	9am - TOPS 1:30pm - Activities Room	6:30pm - Board Meetings	6:30pm - 2nd Friday	5pm - Worship w/
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
9am - Worship w/ 10:15am - Bible Study /	1pm - Staff Meeting	10am - Food Pantry 6:30pm - Guitar Jam	9am - TOPS 1:30pm - Activities Room 3:30pm - Fellowship	6:30pm - Board Meetings	6:30pm - 2nd Friday	5pm - Worship w/
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
9am - Worship 10:15am - Bible Study /	1pm - Staff Meeting	10am - Food Pantry 6:30pm - Guitar Jam	9am - TOPS 1:30pm - Activities Room 3:30pm - Fellowship	6:30pm - Board Meetings	6:30pm - 2nd Friday	5pm - Worship w/
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
9am - Worship w/ 10:15am - Bible Study /	Informer Deadline 1pm - Staff Meeting	10am - Food Pantry 6:30pm - Guitar Jam	9am - TOPS 1:30pm - Activities Room	11:30am - Ladies Luncheon @ 1pm - LWMIL	6:30pm - Call Committee	5pm - Worship w/
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
9am - Worship 10:15am - Bible Study /	1pm - Staff Meeting	10am - Food Pantry 6:30pm - Guitar Jam	9am - TOPS 1:30pm - Activities Room	6:30pm - Call Committee	6:30pm - Call Committee	5pm - Worship w/
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
9am - Worship w/Communion 10:15am - Bible Study /						

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**Worship Schedule:**  
Saturday worship– 5:00pm  
Sunday worship- 9:00am  
Sunday School  
& Bible Study-10:15am

## Office Hours:

Monday – Thursday 8:30am– 2:00pm  
Closed for lunch from 12-1pm



*God's creatures by our bell tower*